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Red Guard Confirms Story Of American in Murmansk

From Cable Dispatches

MURMANSK, Soviet Union

A young American tourist on trial for illegally entering the Soviet Union won unexpected, but vital support yesterday from one of the Russian border guards who arrested him.

The guard, Victor Rebekin, confirmed before a re-Newcomb Mott, 27, of Sheffield, Mass., that he was discovered only after he had approached a Soviet tourist agency, smilingly identified himself as an American and asked for directions.

Obviously nervous, Mr. Rebekin admitted that no border guard saw Mr. Mott crawl through a reinder fence on the Soviet-Norwegian border and trudge nearly a mile toward the Russian border town of Boris Gleb.

The guard also confirmed Mr. Mott's claim that the border was invisible at the point he crossed. Mr. Mott admits climbing through the



Associated Press

Newcomb Mott, on trial in Murmansk.

fence, but contends he did the border.

not know he had crossed the border.

A textbook salesman on vacation, Mr. Mott could be

sentenced to up three years in jail if he is convicted. He already has spent 11 weeks in Murmansk city jail awaiting trial.

Earlier, Mr. Mott, pale and thin but appearing self-assured, told the court he had no "illegal intentions" when he entered the country without a visa.

He smiled and said "Hi" when he saw his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Mott of Sheffield in the courtroom, the first time he has seen them since he left home last

July. He was arrested Sept. 4.

Mr. Mott said he entered the country to buy vodka and souvenirs and because he was curious about the Soviet Union. He said he expected to find signs showing him the way to the border passport control post, but didn't.

He also said that some tourists on the plane to Kirkenes, Norway, told him he did not need a visa. Others told him he did. Only Scandinavian tourists were allowed to enter the region without a visa last summer.